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The Flood of Life
and other Poems by
Richard Church

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The Flood of Life



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The Flood of Life

And other Poems by Richard
Church

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TO
C. J. C.

The Flood of Life

(A Song-Cycle)

1. Primroses

TIMID eyes, awaking one by one,
In the warm brown bed of winter leaves,
What light have you caught from the youthful sun
Through the warp and woof that the hazel weaves ?

What dawn do you herald ? Stars of a day ;
Stars, or tears, or flakes of a foam
Flung from the fairy seas that play
On the steps of the palace of life, whose dome
Shines in the west at the morn of life,
Saddens to eastward as we pass
To the purple gloom and the end of strife
And the perfume of dew on the weeping grass.

The weeping grass, and the weary light,
And under a cypress on the hill
The lonely grace of a daffodil,
And these pale children of the night
Timidly waking, one by one,
When the song of the vesper-bird is done
And the first star shines in the woodside rill.

The Flood of Life

2. Twilight

BETWEEN the day and night young Spring has
found

A time of songful dimness all her own,
When hill and plain in dust of gold abound,
The gold of slanted sunlight, and scents blown
From gardens where the hyacinth awakes,
Or from the dusky woods where paths are sown
With maiden primroses whose fair breath shakes
An undistinguished glory o'er the budding brakes.

When the proud hills are shrunken, the frail dew
Clothes them about with soft mysterious veils
That light the sun-relinquished fields anew
As with the ghost of fire whose splendour fails
When from the east night spreads her sombre wing.
Behind the elm the opal evening pales,
Bequeathing to the young moon everything
Before she sleeps, lulled by the songs the thrushes
sing.

This is the hour when all familiar shapes
Of tree, and hill, and homestead melt and move,
Made vital with the past, whose glory drapes
Their beauty with the forms of vanished love ;
And in the solemn drama of old time
They act with Memory, who from the grove
Of vanished histories, comes forth sublime,
To play the ghost of life and death each eventime !

The Flood of Life

3. The Challenge

DOWN from the hills to the village
A crowd of children came,
Sons of the sons of tillage.
Morning sunlight, laughter afloat,
Put the shadows of night to shame.
And the call of the throstle's note
Down from the hills to the village,
Flung a challenge from nature to man,
Down from the hills whence the children ran,
Sons of the sons of tillage.

Maids of the gift of maiden,
Grace of the childhood crowd,
With beauty alone were they laden,
Down from the hills to the village.
Long laughter ringing aloud
Challenging songs of the tillage
With the call from each innocent throat,
Putting pain of all passions to shame,
Soaring high o'er the clear throstle's note.
With beauty alone were they laden
Down from the hills to the village,
Maids of the gift of maiden,
Sons of the sons of tillage,
A crowd of children came !

The Flood of Life

4. Recompense

FROM the folly of our regretting
And the waste of repentant years,
Through the dawning days and the setting,
Let us be eased of tears.

There is life, and a cause for laughter
In all things now, upon earth.
Death comes, but there follows after
The impulse and passion of birth.

Autumnal days are a sorrow,
And the flight of the swallow is grief,
But the blind snows promise a morrow
Of budding, and blossom, and leaf.

There is youth with its short wild story
Of love too swiftly fled,
Gone ere we grasp the glory,
Faded, satiate, dead !

Life's prime with its high ambition
For knowledge of all things known
Finds at the time of fruition
The reaping is not as the sown.

But shall not the ploughshare of grieving
In laying its furrows of pain,
Make bare for a future receiving
Of ultimate gladness and gain ?

The Flood of Life

5. Sonnet

WOULD that this present springtide which has
made
The wilderness of woodland wake to fire,
Green fire and fresh, of natural desire,
Would that it might touch all the fuel laid
About our burdened souls ! Though we have prayed
Unto ourselves, and to an influence higher,
If such there be who sees our hopes aspire,
Yet have our vain entreaties nothing weighed.

We are left cold ! No promises of bloom
Warm the tired veins of our past winter's love.
This season that we looked for, that we set
As for a goal when autumn's fury strove
To sweep us with this lovely world to doom,
Has dawned at last. . . . Love's sun sinks in regret !

The Flood of Life

6. Daffodils in the Churchyard

IN sacred land of the dead
Under yew trees black with memory,
Sombre with seasons fled,
Love raised her golden head,
Love called upon the sky,
Called from the mounded grass and mossy stone,
Called from the tombs where she had slept so long,
The unseen calling to the wide unknown,
Sorrow aflame with song.

It was a golden song she sang
From out the portals of the tomb ;
And all the vaults and yewboughs rang
With May-joy come and April doom.
A myriad notes in golden throng
Danced on the velvet green of the lawn
Under yew trees black with memory,
Danced with the stars till the eastern sky
Lit with the golden light of dawn,
And the shadow of laughter was low and long,
Sombre with seasons fled ;
Love danced among the dead,
Sorrow aflame with song !

The Flood of Life

7. Triolet

O H we discovered a magic land
Over the heath and the heather.
We followed the path of golden sand
And we discovered a magic land
Beyond the west where the young dreams stand
Waiting the call of the April weather.
Oh we discovered a magic land
Over the heath and the heather.

8. Triolet

C OULD I portray the morning
Or the lark's song i' the sun,
I would—I give you warning
Could I portray the morning—
Make verse for your adorning
Of God's own laughter spun,
Could I portray the morning
Or the lark's song i' the sun!

The Flood of Life

9. Sapphics

OUT of the sad valley, out of the verdure
Of hallowed places in the dim mountains,
The pale mother rises, the mother of all things,
Tired of her grieving.

Tired of her hardness of heart, and her cruel
Anger for all the treacherous god-done
Deeds of high heaven, and the dominion
Of darkness, beneath her.

Rising, grown resolute now with the promise
Of her daughter's return to her bosom, the filling
Of her late solitude with the fair presence
Of love, as aforetime,

Demeter comes from the hills with forgiveness,
Greeting her child with the tears of thanksgiving,
Casting her robes from the face of her sorrow,
Showering beauty,

Spreading her loveliness over the valleys
With laughter of flowers and the perfume of greeting,
With songs of all mothers made glad in the springtime,
Calling her daughter !

The Flood of Life

10. Interlude

IF it should come to us in these young days
Of the year's lovetime, when all things are made
For marriage, and the mutual desire
Of soul to soul, inspired and unafraid ;
If it should be that the high gods require
The parting of our ways,
We are content. As we prepare to leave
All things we shared and sanctified by love,
To the last moment let us seek to prove
What courage our one passion can achieve.

One passion ! Not again to either heart
Could such a faith and comradeship recur ;
It were too much to ask it of the gods.
Nor can we keep the past days as they were,
Since everything—even these springtime clods
From frost to flower start—
Must change ; must change, be it from joy to pain,
From grief to pleasure. This alone we know,
Our present hope contains our future woe,
And what we hold, we may not hold again.

Nor let this stem the keen delight which now
Flows through the opened portals of to-day
And floods the earth with love and songfulness.
The knowledge that these joys must ebb away
But adds to all their wistful loveliness.
See how this apple bough
Burgeons with bloom, which soon will fade and fall.
Even as this are we, our love, our youth.
Let us rejoice, beloved, in this truth,
Fruits follow flowers ; death is not death at all !

The Flood of Life

11. The Nightingale

THE day has sunk exhausted with his strife,
And even yet the western sky is stained
With lightless glooms of blood. The ebbing life
Flames fitfully ; and, noiseless, unrestrained,
The midnight fantasy of summer fire
Reveals the murmuring forest, and is gone
Before the startled leap of my desire
Can tell my heart what it has gazed upon.
Desire ! The hour is rich with sudden hopes ;
The night is odorous with life and love.
Desire ! What is that throbbing from the slopes
Of the dark hill, deep in the silent grove ?
The sullen night is troubled with thy fire,
Oh tragic voice of all the world's desire !

The Flood of Life

12. Cowslips

SINCE the springtime was so glad
And riotous with laughter,
My happy thoughts were tinged with sad
Memories coming after.

For where the sun is brightest seen
The darkest shadows meet,
And love finds heavy steps between
Her careless laughing feet.

So in the meadows, when I met
The maiden cowslips there,
And saw their scented garments wet
With the sweet morning air,

The joy was chastened by a sense
My soul could not define ;
Thus human frailty resents
A beauty too divine.

The substance of our mortal frame
Darkens the light of life,
Turns peaceful innocence to shame,
And even love to strife.

The Flood of Life

13. Nocturne

OUT of the silence of the lonely night—
Silence? Ah no; the wind stirred, and my soul
Trembled with fear of all the powers unknown
That moved about me, though I could not see
Their shapes, nor hear them; yet I felt a low
Undulation, a sense of yearning pain,
Changed from accustomed knowledge to a grief
Of infinite darkness and eternal night.
Out of this murmur of assembled sound,
This sea of troubled silences, there rose
As from a mournful singer long submerged
Beneath these waves ethereal and void,
A solitary voice that gathered all
The tragic thoughts which night had made akin
To madness. With a patient thread of song
It linked them to the goal of my desire,
Gathered and set them for the eyes of hope
To gaze upon, and held among the stars
A steady course towards the revealing dawn,
And ultimate glory shining through the night.

The Flood of Life

14. Vale

WE have had our fill of the warm south weather
With the riches of earth at its fruitful time,
While the hounds of despair have been held in tether
By the leash of our laughter and songful rhyme.

The deep snows departed, and on their going
Spring followed, mocking their whiteness with May,
Then fled from the summer with warm tears flowing,
With the blossom of apples enriching her way.

But we gained, ere she left us, a wonderful treasure
Of truth and youth and the gold of delight,
And richness of song which the lark at his leisure
Shed down on our souls from the sun-searched height.

And summer, but lately passed on to the legion
Of timelost seasons and things gone by,
Filled us first with the wealth of the limitless region
Where the beauty and fulness of the future lie.

Then the fruit that followed has filled us with eating,
And the bread of the autumn brought power and
pride.

It is finished. The snows and the tempests are
meeting ;

The forest has fallen. Who are we, to abide ?

A Goodnight

GOOD night, good night, beloved ;
The last man with his lantern has gone past ;
Along the road we've watched his lingering light
Grow feeble, and so die away at last.
Good night, beloved, good night !

Were ever we so intimate as now ?
The life receding and the light that dies
Have left us, with the warmth of hand to hand
Thus—and caution flies,
Like seething waters up the midnight sand,
Flashes a moment, till the thirsty hour
Absorbs it in its dark and unknown power ;
But now, even in the heart of this
Transfigured moment of delight,
Such unpremeditated bliss,
We are in darkness. . . . Is it right,
This loneliness of naked soul ?
Is our long-fostered aim, our goal,
This self-betrayal in a kiss ?
Ah God ! . . . Beloved, Good night . . . Good night !

The Pond

1. **R**IGID to-day, your banks are bound in ice
And the long-murmuring sedge is frozen
dumb,

Like music fixed in art's immortal vice.
Thus did Apollo's joyousness succumb,
Changing its character of free delight
Into abiding stillness, tombed in stone
At Phidias' will. I wonder whose the might
That bound these waves in silence ; who has thrown
This deathlike form upon their artless grace ?
'Tis the great Sculptor who onetime designed
The pallid lily painted in this place,
Another phase of the Almighty Mind.
All is His work, perfect in every way,
Ranging 'twixt summer and this winter day.

2. How like are you unto the heart of man !
If friends desert him, and with frowning eye
Refuse him aid, frustrate his cherished plan,
He hardens at this lack of charity
And to the world presents a rigid face,
Offended love fast-frozen at its source.
So you, against the inclement winds that race
Heedless and cold upon their arctic course,
Present a bosom set in icy pride,
Showing no movement as on summer days.
And is it thus through all the heavens wide ?
If this be true, why do we then sing praise
To God, with thanks for blessings He has sent,
What time sore troubled by His chastisement ?

The Pond

3. Who knows but what you share to this extreme
Man's thankfulness in spite of circumstance ?
Safe in your icy depths there is, I deem,
Some power that may belie the hard expanse
Of ice which hides your fluctuating soul.
Some inmost sympathy, perchance, you have
With the proud winds that o'er the heavens roll
From east to west. Though every whisp'ring wave
That told your secret soul so trustfully
Unto the summer stars, is now withdrawn
Into your guarded bosom ruthlessly
And your ambitious passion is forsworn,
Yet do I know 'tis but a passing mood ;
You will be melted ere Spring touch the wood.
4. Gleaming upon the white snow-world you lie,
And hither come the skaters. All day long
Your guardian woods re-echo merrily
Their laughter ; and at night the dance and song
Add to the magic of the moonlit snow.
How strange it is, that in this waste of death
Mortals should congregate, their hearts aflow
With carnival delight. The ice beneath
Is silent as the tomb ; yet summer nights
Saw here a revelry perfumed and lit
With lily-hearts and fireflies' myriad lights,
And not one human soul to gaze on it !
Thus man and nature ever are at war
Lest each the other's happiness should mar.

The Pond

5. What of your denizens ? While thus you sleep
'Neath the hypnotic spell of winter's hand,
Who tends your myriad children ? Do they creep
Imprisoned in the frozen weeds and sand,
Changing from life into a torpid death
As some dread unfamiliar force dispels
Their fluid atmosphere, and holds their breath
Immobile ? As the vitreous terror quells
Life after life around them, do they cry
With eager question to the unknown Power
Who lurks, they think, above that changing sky
Where the soft wavelets play from hour to hour ?
Are they like us, who numbed by nature's frown,
Beseech our God to send compassion down ?

6. These flowery banks that once did gently fall
Down to the water's edge, and touched your lip
With perfumed kiss of thyme and foxglove tall,
Now grind you with their icy clods, that grip
The mould, the pebbles, and the blackened moss
In dead coagulation, which like rock
Rolls down their snowy sides, and skims across
Your frozen bosom. They would seem to mock
Your inability to move or feel,
Casting derision on your wintry heart. [reveal,
Could they foretell what change Spring would
These withered banks, or see with equal part
Their own forlorn condition, would their shame
Hold them from this uncharitable game ?

The Pond

7. Nature, it seems, unto her faults is blind
Even as man, and thus her children cry
Their scorn upon the weaknesses they find
Each in its neighbour, nor with inward eye
Will they discover in themselves the fault
They mock in others. Is it thus throughout
The life beyond life which stretches heaven's vault
Unto infinity ? May we not doubt,
When man and nature, everything we see
Inanimate or living on this earth,
Follow this law which knows no charity
Nor pardons wrong by memory of past worth ?
May we not doubt, if, at the end of all,
God will forgive mankind's primeval fall ?
8. To-morrow, it may be, a wind will come
And with its warmth assail your frigid heart,
Unlock the depths that have so long been dumb,
And by an ardent wooing bear a part
In your new birth, when all that winter held
Immutable, with life will be transfused
From vernal founts. The forces that have quelled
Desire and strength, how then will they be used ?
Relentless, like youth bursting from the bond
Of age's discipline, your soul will cast,
In the great heartbeat rising at the fond
First kiss of Spring, all pinions of the past.
To-day, mankind like you is bound in sorrow ;
Shall we awaken to our Spring to-morrow ?

The Pond

9. Seen thus to-night, set in the death-pale earth,
Ghostly reflection of the sterile moon
That lights the snow as at a spectral birth,
Till all seems but an astral world which soon
Must fade ; how far from life, and how remote
From movement or emotion you appear.
Who could imagine that a swan might float
Upon your breast, untroubled by a fear
For all her young lost in the rippled creeks,
Waking the torpid carp to mild surprise,
While over all the tuneful gnatswarm seeks
Some place of refuge in the evening skies ?
And yet this extreme contrast is but slight
To that of man's dark soul and heaven's light.
10. Under the frozen bank, where the rush-blades
Chafed pitilessly like the clash of steel,
And where the moss was laid with icy braids,
I found a dying bird, crushed by the heel
Of the iron time. Its feeble little cry
Rose like a haunted spirit from the poor
Starved body, calling on God reproachfully.
And then the tortured bird for evermore
Passed from the treacherous world that had repaid
The gift of song with this indifference.
Does not the God who sees it grow afraid
That His creation, this vast scheme of sense,
Has now surpassed His own primeval strength,
And will destroy Him and itself at length ?

The Pond

11. As night grew weary, and her tragic eyes
Faded from their late vigil, the young day
Looked over the low mountain ridge that lies
Reflecting all the lights and shades that play
Across the skies throughout the changing year.
I stood then on the borders, where the snow
Quilted about the rushes ; I could hear
The dawn's first movement, as it murmured low,
Approaching from the east. Then suddenly
The white expanse stretching into the mist
Turned gold, and the far hills and flooded sky
Lit into rose and shaded amethyst.
But still, poor frozen pond, your upturned face
Lay all impervious to this act of grace !
12. Your silent shores persuade me that the earth
Is not alone man's heritage ; I hear,
Articulate in things of humbler birth,
The never-ceasing voice of fret and fear ;
Insect and bird, each flower and stone lays claim
To some partition of the firmament,
And, like the miser o'er his hoarded shame,
Cries out its jealousy. The God who sent
Life down to this possession of all things,
Did He foresee how His most generous gift
Would thus provoke desires, hates, cherishings,
Surely would not have left mankind to shift
Master of all, yet lacking the high fire
To organize this chaos of desire !

The Pond

13. Not often is the earth so desolate.

Moveless beneath the superincumbent time
Life hangs suspended in the scales of fate
Pallid as death. The silence is sublime
This winter morn ; I seem to stand amid
The timeworn gods upon Olympus' side,
Deathless and dead as the great Pyramid
Guarding the deserts which spread far and wide
O'er Africa. So by this English pond,
Set in the midst of homesteads and calm life,
I am reminded of the lands beyond [strife.
Which long have vanished with their fame and
Thus do we live by symbols, thus we dwell
On earth, and build therefrom our heaven and hell.

14. Now all is changed, the icy mask you wore

Melts at the touch of some wide influence.
Whose was the hand, which in a moment tore
This lie from off your face, and flung it hence ?
Vain questioning it seems ; each change that moves
Across the world, calls from man's wondering soul
This ever eager cry, and God, who loves
Mankind's desire to comprehend the scroll
Whereon He writes His secret purposes,
Replies as He deems fit, for evermore [says
With change upon change ; and we learn what He
Listening through Nature's ever-open door.
Then be at peace : unto our present cry
The unconscious flowers of Spring will soon reply !

The Pond

15. Patience ! This fretfulness itself portends
The imminent change ! Winter, despotic king,
Trembles upon his throne as the wind sends
Perfumes to herald the return of Spring.
And now the van of the invading host
Advances on the rivulets and streams ;
Now the first thrush begins, waking the ghost
Of musical desire and ardent dreams.
Ah youth, what is your sorrow, do you fear
This waking pulse of life, lest it should end
In summer madness and a joy too dear
To last until the autumn fruit-boughs bend ?
You cannot know from memory of times past
That grief is but a form of joy recast !
16. This Spring, whose early promises awake
Movements and impulses of fresh delight
Upon the changing features of the lake,
As though the virgin waters are affright
At the unknown caress, stirs in my soul
Dim memories of vernal days long sped.
This symphony wherein such passions roll
I now compare to that Spring music fled
With former years, and what is vanished seems
As changed as the dead face of someone loved,
As empty as all day-remembered dreams
Whose shadow passions leave our hearts unmoved.
The Spring days gone lack the inspiring scope
Of this fair morning which is lit by hope.

The Pond

17. Low waves that murmur in the midnight air,
What secrets would you tell which long ago
Were whispered when love-troubled souls laid bare
Their hope and sorrow ? As the ages flow
Heedless above you, do you lose in part
The memory of nature's ceaseless play [heart,
Around you ? Man, with tempest-threatened
The outer darkness blinding his soul's ray,
Envies your calm imperviousness. Who knows
But what you have your sorrow, or that, deep
Beneath your lilled surface, a grief flows
For centuries fled and seasons lost in sleep ?
The universe of pain is not alone
Man's portion in this gift of the unknown.

18. Ling'ring beside you as the day withdrew
Westward with fading banners, and the sound
Of distant music from the thrush, I knew
That for one magic moment I had found
A light that showed to me my inmost soul.
What was the power that could thus inspire
My life to this high vision, and make whole
What seemed and seems a chaos, a fierce fire
That burns for no true purpose ? Then I saw
The primary design, the Hand that lit
The fuel in obedience to sanc law,
And I rejoiced in the result of it.
Westward with fading banners passed the day . . .
And night came, turning all the gold to grey !

The Pond

19. After long absence I have come again
To the low shore where, in times past, I heard
The music of the reeds and falling rain
At eventide, while one inspired bird
Lured me beyond the barriers of time
Where youth remembers, and sad age forgets
Old sorrow's laughter and young laughter's crime.
What may I learn from the bright sun, who sets
Into the west with his repeated flame
And glorious gesture, of which he never tires ?
He finds no weariness nor thought of shame
In repetition, nor may time cloud his fires.
Impetuous youth, impatient of life's pace,
Here with your lesson are you face to face !
20. The tumult dies away, the human strife
Recedes and is forgotten, and I find
In the resultant silence a new life,
As though I have passed death, and left behind
All the known world wherein I gave and took,
Laboured and slept, hated, and loved, and feared.
This quietude of soul with which I look
Upon the evening sky, that yet is scared
With the last wound of day and hurtful light,
Has come all unawares, and strengthened me
To wider vision. Now I see aright
The purpose of the past day's agony.
Peace ! Solitude ! Oh death. . . . Oh Life,
What is this nothingness ? . . . What is this strife ?

Winter

1.

NOW let imagination fly
In hand with hoar antiquity ;
Tale of goblin, elf and fay,
Shall drive the winter dark away,
Hanging tapestries upon
Every window, one by one ;
Mystery in ply and fold,
Magie spell against the cold,
Though upon the straining door
East and North in combat roar,
Shrieking in the wounded tree
Shrilly, keenly, wickedly.

Rising ere the daylight fills
The snowy hollows of the hills
With rose petals of the dawn,
Ere the frost forsakes the lawn,
Or the moon has ceased to shine
Or the starved night-wolf to whine :
Rising by warm candle light,
While from out the frostbound night
Morning like a robin's breast
Against the glittering stars is pressed
Until they melt into the mist.
Now the scented woodsmokes twist,
Soaring from the cottage fires,
Sudden city of dream-spires,
While across the barren land
Come old memories, a band

Winter

Of travellers in motley clad.
Some are merry, some are sad,
Some are bright with melody ;
Others robed in mystery,
Dimly seen beyond the years,
Bring again forgotten tears,
Whispering in monotone,
Little friend, you are upgrown,
Now have found a manly form ;
Yet I see you lying warm
Close beside your mother's heart,
And I see you sharing part
Of a childish comfiture.
Then your grief could not endure
Longer than a moment's span :
And the lanes wherein you ran
Were a market of delight
Peopled through the day and night
With a throng of fairyfolk.
Though no elder ever spoke
Of them, yet, all unawares
They followed you, in sleep, in prayers,
Eating, or when by the fire
You watched the flames dance and retire,
Till the hollow caves of red
Haunted you asleep in bed.
Little friend, the cloak you wear
Of manhood, is a robe of fear
Hiding from the world to-day
That you're still a child at play,
Dreaming still of fairy kings,
Haunted castles, magic rings,

Winter

Trusting still that in the wood
Spirits dwell for ill or good.
Do not hide your soul from me—
I am truthful Memory.
Be yourself again, as young
As when with baby hands you clung
To mother-skirts, when in the park
Your play was startled by the dark
That dropped a curtain o'er the sun,
Of sable and of silver spun.
You are still the wondering child
To the world unreconciled,
Hating all the bonds which life
Puts upon you in the strife
For the foolish things men call
Their aim—their golden all-in-all.
Still you find in a dead leaf
Greater cause for hidden grief
Than in monetary cares.
Not yours the marketable wares,
Yours are treasures of the soil,
Of water, air, won without toil,
Hard toil or sin. . . .” Thus spake the shade
Of Memory, which the dawn had made
Between the trees and the snowmist,
The black boughs and the amethyst
Of moonlight mingled with the sun.
Thus the dawn, dream-dawn, half night,
Part shadowland and part daylight,
When mystery of twilight things
Fills the street with soundless wings,

Winter

Past visions of a star that led
Eastern wizards to Christ's bed,
Lost perfumes of the Manger where
The Virgin her own Saviour bare.
And sudden on the potent morn
Comes rioting of laughter born
In the childhood of our days ;
Holly-dreams, and mistletoe,
And the stories that we know
Are but relics of old times,
Bardic revelries and rhymes.
These are things none may forget
Till our souls dismiss regret,
And the spirits of the snow
Bring no dreams of long ago.

2.

In the cosy inglenook
Firebright eyes search through the book,
The changing folios of flame ;
The same familiar winter game
Our fathers played in centuries past.
Even as thus, their memories cast
Roseate colours on the days
When youth walked with its winsome ways
Along the hilltops of desire.
This is the picture in the fire,
The radiant heart, the soul of flame :
And through all time it is the same ;
The picture of a younger day—
To youth—the childhood flown away :

Winter

To age—the echo of lost youth
And memory of the quest for truth,
The skeleton of lost belief,
The power for joy, the pride for grief,
Ensanguined for one haunted hour
Into a resurrected flower
With former fragrance lingering deep
About the closing vales of sleep.
Thus is the journey to the grave
Beguiled a moment by a stave
Of music which the early days
Made about the travellers' ways,
With the grim goal too far ahead
Upon the journey newly sped
To cloud the wanderer's young delight
With presage of the ultimate night.

3.

Where the northern sky was wild
I met a boy—a phantom child
Who trod the course of other years
Along the way of ancient fears.
This was in the twilight land,
That no earth-king may demand,
But which is fealty to all
Who before the Manger fall
Worshipping the Sacred Young,
Shepherds and Wise Men among ;
Sacred Young, who represents
Every age of innocence,
All the dreams that lurk within
The childheart yet unspoiled by sin—

Winter

The mind that is a crystal sphere,
A prophecy without a fear,
A trust without a bond or deed,
A passion guiltless of all greed.

Through the wide expanse of snow
I saw the little footprints go
Wistfully, as though in search
Of secrets from the village church.
Following, I passed the door—
Stood upon the sacred floor,
There before the altar saw
A revelation of the law,
The law which says, "All men shall be
Submissive to the mystery—
The mystery by God designed
To discipline audacious mind."
I saw the child before the throne—
Humanity, naked, alone
Before the awful power of this
Presence, inestimable bliss ;
And marvelled that the boy could be
Inspired to such humility.
This is a purity, I thought,
Experience has never taught ;
And he has learnt from winter snow
This chastity, and from the woe
Of naked tree and hungry bird
Has gleaned the sorrow of the Word.
Thus in winter does he see
Revealed the Christian mystery.

Winter

4.

Who can be the little child
Set amid the winter wild ?
Is he spirit of the snow
Woven out of long-ago—
Memory of vanished things
Conjured by the beat of wings
In the airways of the soul ?
Suddenly the storm-mists roll
Upward, and my troubled eyes
Falter into paradise ;
And the world I see across
Shows life's utmost gain and loss.
Straight I know the child—I see
Revealed by some deep mystery,
Myself, knee-bent before the years
Then unfolded—dark with fears :
These, the years through which I see
My childhood bow in fealty
To the dim future, which is this !
Little figure, praying for bliss,
Look not this way, lest you know
The utter fulness of your woe.
O God, in Thy kindness, blind
The little eyes that seek to find
The vision of futurity,
Lest, in horror, he should see
This figure, and despairing, know
The desolation of the snow.

Winter

5.

Winter, now this song is spent
Of the passion you have lent—
From your white eternal womb,
Autumn's apocalyptic tomb
From which Spring's abundant seed
Is by laws of life decreed
Your chastity of snow to break—
The floods of memory awake !
Thus, not of your outward ways
Has my singing uttered praise ;
For greater, purer, than them all
Is your silent, vast snow pall.
Summer, autumn, spring are sweet
Mortals, fled on mortal feet :
You are mystery of death—
You are life's first pulsing breath ;
Life and death, and the great peace
That lies eternal amid these—
The white expanse whereon our dreams
Picture awhile their pallid themes ;
The shadow-realm where visions roll,
Where truly lives the human soul
Though doomed, by chance, on earth to stay
'Mid unrealities of clay !
Thus, winter song is of a dream—
The dream of life along time's stream !

Spring

WINTER, who from his ancient treasury
At his first coming gave such ample gifts,
Legend and tale, and nights aglow with store
Of fireside laughter, while the wind-hurled drifts
Buried the gorse upon the lonely moor,
Tombing fantastically
Familiar shapes—Ah ! winter has now spent
His powers, and languid in these later days
Frets on it lightless rains that stain the ways
Where late long jewels glittered in the bent.

His empery has grown too wearisome ;
Barren in youth, he finds unhonoured age,
And learns how all the beauty of white rime
That decked his first triumphal equipage,
Is spurned by earth now that her fruitful time
Is prophesied to come
By life's first leaping in her mighty womb.
The promise of the bud, the coming song
That floats before the flowers' advancing throng,
Ah, pale king Winter, these foretell his doom !

This perfume is a prophecy of life,
The day when beauty shall return again
From winter haunts within the hollow cave
Of earth's dark womb, the breeding-place of pain,
Whither she gathers from the yielding grave
The fallen fruits of strife.
To-day she breathes, the mother of all things ;
Soon will her breath bear song upon the air,
The fields will wake in flowers, and everywhere
Will echo the rustle of life's unseen wings.

Spring

The season of young life, the perfumed days
Of laughter, promises, and love's first kiss ;
The earth is rich again with prophecies,
But through it all the heart may not dismiss
Deep sorrowing, for human miseries
Bear down the psalm of praise,
Bear down the music, cloud the eyes of mirth,
Bear down and break the bud and spoil the bloom
With heavy grief and presaging of doom,
Since in these days death triumphs over birth.

Can we dismiss the sorrow of mankind
But for a day, and give our thoughts again
To this young maiden who approaches now
Over the fallow fields with gifts of rain,
Warm scents and music from the budding bough,
Music that brings to mind
The early dreams of life, the early love
When thrushes fluted long through rapturous days,
Filling the hours with their recurrent praise
Before June's mystic songster found the grove ?

Is she Persephone come from the place
Where Aidoneus rules among the dead ?
Has she returned to gather or bestow
Abundance of the beauty longtime fled
When only Hecate saw her, captive, go
To imbue death with grace ?
Is Springtide come as bride to cruel death,
Coerced to bring new life into the land,
Waking the blossoms with one magic hand
And with the other smiting on our breath ?

Spring

Poor maiden spring, sad-eyed because your task
Is shameful and unlovely to your heart,
You are not blamed for all these lurid days,
You but fulfil your time-allotted part.
Although your duty has such grievous ways
Our love you need not ask,
We love you still for what you were of yore
When with your bountiful mother you were free,
Vying with that proud beauty whom the sea
Brought for our sorrow from the Cyprian shore.

For she has loved the harness and the sword,
Death's cruel kinsman who to-day has spread
Dismay amid mankind, until the earth
Seems but to mock at our remembered dead
With her fair promises of floral birth.
But your despotic lord
You love not thus, but even as we, are made
His victim, be it slave or crowned queen.
And now on the fresh meadows you are seen
Seeking the haunts where as a child you played.

Fear should not cloud this morning of delight.
Let us dismiss these shades, these prophecies
Of doom, and with uplifted voices, sing
Our praise to the great Mother, Earth, who lies
In travail ; let us share her labouring
Through each impassioned night
Of hope and bringing-forth. Sorrow is wrong,
Grief is ingratitude, regret is vain
Lost in the embracing glory of her pain ;
Death-memories would despoil the natal song !

Spring

Therefore I seek to banish from my theme
The human shadow that obscures the sun
Of these fair days. Yet am I diffident
To leave the histories of laurels won,
Of glorious death, and giant labours spent
To bring the nations' dream
Of freedom to reality, and lay
The founding-stone of liberty and peace,
And future world-republic, where shall cease
The shame that Mammon harbours in our day.

And this I do for service to the soul
Afflicted, and the heart that would forget
Its recent sacrifice, and load of pain.
I would assuage the torment of regret,
The vision of wounds grievous, and the slain,
And war's grim thunder-roll.
Even as bodies tired by cities' strife
Are comforted by nature, so I seek
To nourish faith that grief has rendered weak,
And feed religious hope with feasts of life.

So may it be that Spring is but a maid
Come with all innocence, devoid of sin,
Who knows not death nor horror of decay ;
Her body beauty, and the soul within
A spiritual promise, which to-day
Will blossom in the glade,
Will fill the hedgerow twigs with purple veins,
And with sweet influence wake the woods and rills
And bid the young lambs gambol on the hills
And sweep across the ocean with warm rains.

Spring

These glories are eternal, but the strife
Of man will cease, and all his fretful race,
And he must pass save for his ruined works,
But Spring shall come, and touch again with grace
Of magic fingers, till the soul which lurks
In death shall wake to life.

The moss will glow afresh, the daffodil
Wave in the grass, young laughter of the sun,
When the divine history of man is done,
His works rewarded by the Almighty Will.

Lay hold of things eternal, we are made
Potent for greater issues than the strife,
The fratricidal deeds which mar to-day.
Now at the moment of recurring life
Turn from destruction with a new dismay,
Let life make us afraid
Of death, and the wide evil that we breed
Among earth's strong endeavours to increase
The beauty of things promised ; let us cease
Lest we should spoil the wisdom of the seed.

These days are song-divided, and the hours
Arc brimmed with laughter verging into tears ;
There is no thought but thought of April rain,
Short rain and tangled sunlight, sudden fears
And joyousness breathed in the breath of pain,
A sky that lights and lowers,
A moment's joy fleeing a moment's sorrow,
A building of cloud-castles that awake
Fervent and fairy passions ere they break
In showers that kiss the blossoms of to-morrow.

Spring

To-morrow, Springtime's child, on whom she spends
Her maiden riches and her shame ablush,
Screening the nursling with a veil that floats
Over the forest trees and every bush ;
For whom she borrows the rich thrush's notes
When wilful daylight ends
And fickle clouds forsake the deepening skies,
Hiding their rose and gold in violet night,
While this day's miracle of new delight
Unborn upon the broad earth's bosom lies.

To-morrow ? Yet to-day is all delight,
Save for our sorrow lest the bud and blade
Unopened,—ere their early sheaths are shed
From the sun-woven bridal robes—be laid
Low on dewed lawns of morning, stricken dead
By the sharp lance of night.
For memory is faithful to dismay,
And former Springs have seen the opening bloom
Pass in a night stillborn unto its doom—
And in our hearts the wound remains to-day !

And in the midst of human singing, lo !
There rises a new music, yet as old
As ever life could be. From the low field,
Down where the brook flows by the wattled fold,
Where the brown stubble promises to yield
Lush grasses that will show
How the cool water spreads beneath their stems,
There comes a beat of wings amid the dust,
And soaring sunward, a bright shaft is thrust,
The first lark scattering his lyric gems !

Spring

And now there is a sound that swells and beats
About the woods, the wild south-western gale
Treading regardless on the tender leaves.
The ocean is his mother, and the pale
And perfumed underforest, where earth grieves
In Amazonian heats,
This is his tropic sire who gave him might
To drive the startled stars out of the sky,
To pile the scurried cloud-crag mountain-high
And free the ice-locked valleys in a night !

Ah, eagle Spring, half maid, half soaring bird,
Chaste, calm, and cold, yet wantoning with love ;
Earth welcomes you, earth wearied of long sleep,
And dreams which in the heart of winter prove
How death finds mystic glory in the deep
Passion that lies interred
Beneath impenetrable snows. Oh Spring,
You have come rich with promise and desire,
Kindling the skies and forests into fire
And flashing laughter on the swallow's wing.

And in the perfume of your early coming,
There is a promise greater than all those
Which are sweet memories now of former years.
The breath which through your mouth prophetic flows
Has fairer secret whisperings for our ears
Of a far greater homing
Than ever swallows on the springtimes gone
Made northward, bearing in their wings the light
Of the rich south, and rosehearts, and the bright
Songs of the sowing and the harvest done.

Spring

Soon will return the sweetest balsam-time,
And healing herbs will follow after spring,
Coming to earth with healthful ministry
Through the warm hours, to mend the wounded wing,
Administering nature's charity
To victims of our crime.
All hatred and the nakedness of pain
Will be deep hidden under foliage,
And beauty then will flourish after rage
As the calm meadow flowers follow rain.

Now I perceive upon the throne of life
The young queen Hope, crowned by the sacred hand
Of Peace. And in a forest is she set,
While at her feet Spring blossoms from the land,
All forms of joy, save for one flower—Regret.
With petals born of strife,
This bloom, more fragile than an echo lost
Over the hills of sorrow, ever keeps
Watch o'er the mounded grass, whereunder sleeps
The past, the sacrifice, the bitter cost !

The bitter cost ! Ah Spring, but lately born,
How should you know the agony foregone,
How should you see beneath the mantling snow
Death lying stark for grief to brood upon
Till memory sinks under Time's ceaseless flow,
And love forgets to mourn ?
We would not burden you with this, to spoil
The thoughtless beauty of your youthful days,
Lest we should lose your laughter and the praise
Of verdure rising from the waking soil.

Spring

Therefore let us unite in a new task
To cover up the shame of death, and hide
The fruit of our transgression from the sight
Of maiden Spring. Lay all our hate aside ;
More truly are we children of delight.
War is a lying mask
Behind whose soulless gaze we have betrayed
Ourselves, and our Creator, with His Gift
Of life and truth. The time is come to lift
The veil, for Spring, the Bride, stands undismayed !

Summer

(Hendecasyllabics)

THROUGH winter Hope was brave, and through
the springtime

Sweet Hope ran high, like sap along the branches
Arising in the early time of budding ; [down,
Yet ere the leaves have cast the withered sheaths
Hope with her eyes of youth has fallen weary,
Weary with later heat and disappointment,
For she has learnt how promises and beauty
Must bring fulfilling and the youngest fear down,
The fear which follows gifts, which shadows riches,
And lays all wealth and glory of thanksgiving
Along with dust and ultimate starvation,
The hunger which must close all things terrestrial
When at the end life fails, and the last morning
Dawns in the last sad springtime which will never
Give place to summer and its fruits, but end there,
End in the bud, when the half-risen sap falls,
Leaving at last death for the final harvest.

After the winter torment and the long strife
Of April rains and passionate winds of March,
Peace now is here, the quietude of beauty,
Perfume and peace of fragrant-hearted flowers
Which have forgotten all the fears that lingered
In heart of the bud, and made the promise bitter
With terror of things young, eternal sorrow
Of youth at blind wild strife with future darkness,
The life untraversed, guessed at with surmising,
Golden surmising which youth alone can hold
With faith for conquest, and the splendid vision
Of morning lands and misted hills unveiling.

Summer

And lo, in peace we thought to find perfection,
And out of love we fashioned in our dreaming
Most glorious fruits and harvesting of laughter,
Laughter wide-eyed, and laden deep with knowledge,
As frank foxglove bell is burdened with the bee,
Down towards dusk when owls begin their crying
Ere yet the nightingale and southern darkness
Conspire together for their sad souls' comfort.

What do we hold of this delight around us,
This that we dreamed of when the snows of winter
Froze in our hearts the beauty of desiring ?
Now we may know fruition and the flower
More bountiful than ever hope of springtime
Conceived in youth and fervent April passion.
Long days are loth to leave the skies, the north glows
Golden above the hill and heavy forest,
The heavy woods with foliage o'erburdened,
Whereunder green and soothing grotto paths wind
Luring through stately aisles of dim enchantment.
The north glows into midnight, and the lime trees
Shed spilth of odour on the seeding grasses [skim
Where lovers walk waistdeep, and where the bats
With creaking wings, and moths flit by, whispering
Dusky secrets in the ear of night, faint thoughts
Half born in darkness and those further regions
Made black with death more dark than any midnight
On earth, or night of human heart despairing.

Almost, it seems, before the final sound falls
Into silence, and the last late day songster
Singing beyond her noon into the twilight

Summer

Until, in sad surprise, she finds her music
Mantled in darkness and made sweeter thereby ;
Lo, echo has not lost the memory of it
Ere in the east the timid stars are trembled
By the white promise of the coming morning.
Twilight in hand with twilight, and between them
A little space of darkness, where the secrets
Of summer love and all its grace of perfume
Are whispered, heart pressed to heart in agony,
Drowned in the ecstasy of revelation.

Ah, summer night, with glory of song rising,
With music of odours and wild swift colours,
You may not now hear, breaking from the meadows
Where curd of blossom whitens to the hedge-side,
The sudden laughter from the throat of passion,
Low as thrushes' notes when the eves of April
Learn first the warm wet kiss of southern breezes
And swoon into the arms of night with longing.
Death, that we prayed might vanish ere the spring
fled

Has grown more fierce and cruel since your coming,
Oh summer night, to whom we looked for succour !
Our winter song was heavy with this slaying ;
Murder and greed, the sum of human folly,
Shattered our melodies of life at springtime,
And we were grieved with the tragedy of living,
Oh summer night, and looked to you for succour.
Now you are come, and lo, upon the petals
Of the curled rose, where nestling sleeps her perfume,
Blood lies, and tears for all the bitter spending
Of young life and young love that should be mated

Summer

To-day, and making homeward with warm touches
Of lips, and words breathed low with tender laughter
Telling of nuptial joys and of their rich fruit.

Summer, you close our singing with your beauty ;
We have not song to praise you in our sorrow,
Too sweetly foreign are you now. We, outcast,
Spendthrifts of life and squanderers of living,
We have taken and have been unthankful.
Summer, forgive us ; gracious mother, pardon ;
We are but children striving after power,
Power and mastery of truth. Behold us,
How we fail, turned by each poor wayward purpose
Of greed and every evil passion prompting
Our fallible hearts. We are not as you are,
Calm mother of all beauty, who with gentle
Industrious fingers weaves the fragile blossom
With warp and woof of beauty and ultimate
Seeding, with a shadow of sweet promise ;
You who wake deep music in the mountainous
Wastes, and bring songs from the generous ocean,
Oh summer, maker of all things known to us
Whereby we live and glean our future living,
Turn not from us now in these our wanton days,
These days of breaking and insane destruction.
Bruised summer, bruised and broken mother season,
Forgive, forgive the treading of your blossoms,
The squandering of all your hope. Forgive us,
Teach us, for we are grown afraid, our mother,
Afraid of life and death and this false freedom
Of pride ; teach us humility, the wisdom
Wherewith you welcome jealous Autumn coming.

Song—The Late Love

APRIL, the wilful girl, is fled ;
She was a fickle love, I found.
Now in my heart May reigns instead
Triumphant with white flowers and red
Over the late pale blooms of the ground ;
Hawthorn ablaze o'er the crocus dead.

April was sweet to my love-starved heart,
Found alone on the verge of the snow ;
Coquette of the bud, her young lips apart
With childlike joy for the Spring's bright mart.
She was tearful with laughter, laughing with woe,
Tiptoe—await for time's race to start !

Thus she has fled me, light of worth ;
And all that I have to remember her by
Is a handful of daffodils thrown on the earth,
Her blue scarf in the woods where she sprang to birth,
Her white soft playball afloat in the sky,
And a sad, sad memory of her mirth !

Sweet Pea

WHAT wine hath the spring
To fire with delight
This fair blossom wing
Like a dream in the night ?

This subtle desire
Of blossom for pain,
Who kindled the fire—
Who quenched it again ?

No answer for this
Desire in the night,
This passion of bliss.
O flower of flight,
What song may retain
The breath of thy kiss,
The subtle desire—
O blossom of pain,
Who kindled thy fire ?

Anniversary

1. **R**EMEMBRANCE—this is ever sweet, though
oft
Fused deep with slumbering sorrows still aglow,
Still potent to return with whisperings soft
In those quiet hours when time wanders slow
Across a level meadow, or a place
Made smooth in life's hard journey. It is sweet
Still to remember the old hope and grace,
Though they be trampled long since under feet,
And faith be bruised. Has not the loss endeared
The few yet left us by the greed of time ?
That which is gone is no more than we feared,
And memory has made that loss sublime.
Thus, it is sweet remembrance, for it shows
Against each loss how nobly our love grows.

2. What shall I say ? This is an hour of peace,
Of thankful recollection ; and to speak
Were but to make a mockery of these
Great dreams which silence fosters. If I seek
To sing what needs no singing, since you know
The unheard song before it leaves my soul,
I should but break the magic silence, so. . . .
Ah, listen ! . . . how the poor faint echoes roll
Over the vastness ! Yet the matter still
Is unexpressed, save that from each to each
Our eyes in spite of all may drink their fill,
And master heights that words may never reach.
This is enough, beloved ; let us stay
One moment thus—and then resume our way !

Anniversary

3. Slowly the firelight spreads a brighter glow
Over the room, and lights the furniture
With twisted shadows, shapes that come and go
Mysteriously. The sounds of day fall fewer
Upon the ear, until they cease, and night
Enters a noiseless kingdom. It is good
To be together thus with our delight,
Recalling happily how we two stood
At this same moment in the year gone by
Heavy and dazed by the o'erwhelming power
Now culminated in our unity, [hour.
Love's unseen strength made plain in that great
So let us sit, watching the woodflames start,
Happy with silent memory in each heart.

4. A year ago, and so the morning came
Over the eastern hills with timid eyes,
Like Love's approaching in its modest shame.
So woke the robin with his melodies
Singing of frost-fall and the wondrous snow.
Ah ! it is all the same, and ever new ;
And in this latest morning who would know
That we can bring love's first year in review
Until we reach this moment, when the day
Hides the last star of its farewell ? All seems
Unaltered in the world—but in our way
We have increased our treasury of dreams,
And this same morning that we look upon
Is thus much richer than the vanished one.

Anniversary

5. Let us recall, beloved, what is gone ;
The birth-hour of our lasting happiness ;
How for a single moment the sun shone
Upon the bridal morn from out the press
Of rainclouds, like a prophecy 'mid tears :
And how it found reflection in each heart,
Rising triumphant over the dark fears
And dread of what the future might impart.
Do you remember how the clouds once more
Closed round about us, flinging out your veil,
And bared your face to me ? Never before
Seemed love so timid or desire so frail.
But clearer than all else, that single gleam
Of sunlight lingers in this year-old dream !
6. This much I know, the seasons we have spent
Together, seeing with a single heart,
The birth of beauty, and how summer lent
Maturity to fill each promised part
With fruitfulness, ere time fostered decay ;
These have produced a blossom that remains
When nature's lavish treasures fall away,
Swept to oblivion by autumn's rains.
Our nursling faith, tried by experience
Of winter's hard severity, endures [scents ;
Beyond earth's flowers and all their wondrous
In bud, nature their mortal state ensures.
But we have broken from the laws of earth ;
Love's year of life proves its immortal worth !

Anniversary

7. Walking to-day, we climbed the hill, and came
Upon a sudden vista of the downs,
An endless stretch of beauty, in a frame
Of purple distances, and moving browns
Beyond which lay the ocean and the south.
We stopped, spellbound and silent, hand in hand,
Until I turned, and saw your quivering mouth
Fighting with tearfulness. . . . Dear heart, I stand
And make confession. . . . I was moved to tears.
So single was our vision, that I knew
We saw before us the long stretch of years
And that the tears awakened by the view
Betokened gratitude, to think that we
Are destined for this vast tranquillity !

Rondel of Regret

IN time of pain some solace could I find
That shone with hope upon my darkened mind,
Bright fortitude made promises of gain
And pride broke all the bonds which grief would bind
Upon her limbs ; and all my fear was slain
In time of pain.

But now in hours of ease I turn my thought
Unto that span of life all sorrow-fraught,
And I recoil, lest Destiny again
Should bid recur what in those days it brought,
For fear has left the grave where it had lain
In time of pain.

Almost I might regret that life is now
Made fair for me with love, lest every vow
Sworn in those darker days should be in vain,
Lest joy should let me not remember how
Courage upheld me through the storm and strain
In time of pain.

Sonnet

WEARY of all the perjuries of time,
When earthborn beauty barren proves, and
vain

Of those false promises the summer clime
Made with warm lips, my baffled soul would fain
Seek a release from this autumnal mould
Of clay, and break from servitude to death.
Death ! The master whose hard laws enfold
These fair embellishments, whose cruel breath
Withers away this outward loveliness
Wherein we seek for truth and all that makes
Us one with the wide infinite ; no less,
No more : and what we build therefrom, death breaks !
And thus, dispirited, weary of heart,
We seek a truth where earth's show has no part.

June's Temptation

IF old and rich September
Came in the heat of noon
And bribed you with gold, O June,
Would your hot youth remember
The innocent lonely tune
O'er which May's lips could hover
When the first bloom fled the clover ;
When her cream-white blossoms trembled down
At the touch of your hand on her maiden-gown ?
Could love bid your heart remember
If old and rich September
Gave you her gold, O June ?

Or would you forget the Maytime
In the bribe of the harvest-eye ?
Between the night and the daytime
Would you make the young maid grieve
For the loss of her great young lover ?
Or would your firm faith discover
In May's rich way a deeper measure
Of gold than September's proffered treasure ?
Between the night and the daytime,
If old and rich September
Bribed you with gold, O June,
Would your hot youth remember,
Or would you forget the Maytime ?

Youth's Secret*

FROM you a secret thing I learned
When youth was wistful with desire,
When in our eager blood Spring burned
And Knowledge was a beacon-fire.

A beacon-fire set on a height
Inland, but shining on the sea ;
A prophecy, a new delight,
A calmness and tranquillity.

And steering there, my vessel's prow
Found harbour from the storms of youth.
This is the secret thing which now
Has made me captain of the truth ;
This is the secret thing I learned,
A beacon-fire set on a height
For youth made wistful with desire
Through gazing on an unknown sea :
This is the secret truth you burned
Into my soul ; a new delight,
A calmness and tranquillity !

(* *By kind permission of the Editor of the WINDSOR MAGAZINE.*)

The Meadow-blue

FLECK of the sky
Afloat on the corn,
Skimming the rye—
Oh, whither borne ?

Does thought contrive
That wilful way
Of flight, thou live
Delight of day ?

Adieu—this thought
Too heavy is,
Too human-wrought
For thee—dawn's kiss !

Wild Roses

(From the Song-Cycle "Noontide")

SPRING with her primrose gone,
And for a space of days
No queen to ride upon
The hidden lanes and ways
Where the wild bracken grows,
Then lo, on fronds and sprays
Like fragile wings and fair,
Half opened, as in praise,
Half closing, as in prayer,
Alights the first wild rose !

Envoi

ADIEU, little song !
Spread your wings and away.

Be you right, be you wrong ;
Be you sad, be you gay,
Fly out to the throng
Of mankind for a day.

Carry laughter along,
And the perfume of May.

Adieu, little song !
Spread your wings and away !

Comforts Cottage.

Staffhurst Wood

nr. Oxford.

Surrey.

25th Mar. 1928.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing a copy
of "Hurricane," the only book of
mine of which I possess a copy.

I believe the price of this is 2/6.^d

The "Flood of Life," my first
book, is out of print, but you
might enquire of Jonathan Cape Ltd.
if they have a spare copy. I

saw in a bookseller's catalogue
recently that a copy was for sale,
but the robber asked £1.1.0, while
the original price was 1/-!

"Phileas" you can obtain from
Blackwell Ltd. Oxford. at 2/6.^d

Last year Faber & Gwyer issued
a book of vers libres, called "Mood
without Measure" at 2/6.^d The
three books by Benn you will
know about. An essay called

~
'Mary Shelley' has just been
published by Gerald Howe Ltd..

I thank you for your
interest in my work. I trust that
as time goes on it will not dis-
appoint you. The life of art is
a terribly exacting one, and
disaster always seems to be
inevitable.

Yours very truly,

Richard Church.

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[P.T.O.]

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